

# welcome.

FEB  
2019

A MONTHLY SNAPSHOT • HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH • PASTOR GREGG MATTE

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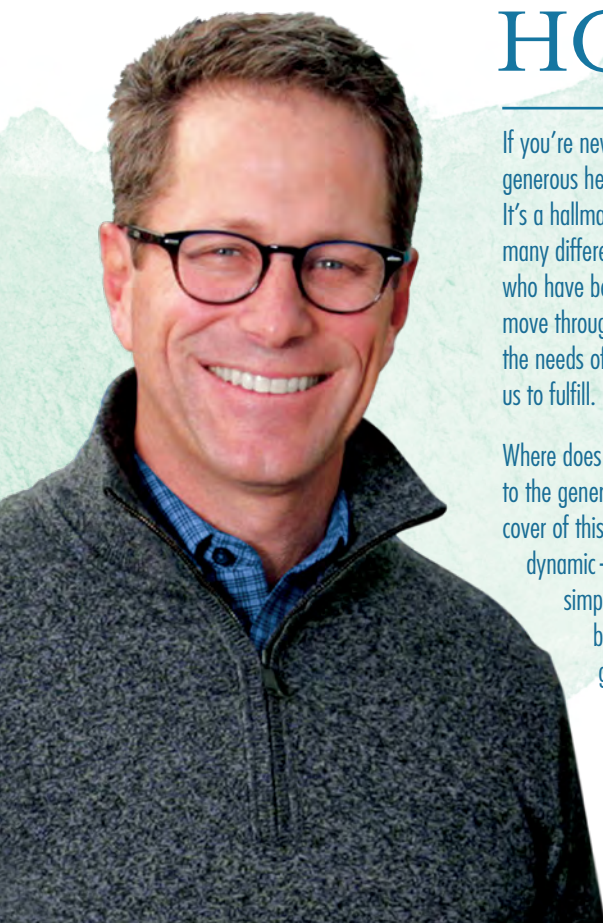


HOUSTON'S FIRST  
BAPTIST CHURCH

HOUSTONSFIRST.ORG



# Welcome to HOUSTON'S FIRST!



If you're new to Houston's First, you will soon experience the generous heart of our church family if you haven't already. It's a hallmark of our culture that is consistently expressed in many different ways by people from all walks of life. Ask those who have been around a while to share how they've seen God move through our members to share what they have to meet the needs of others and to support the ministry He has called us to fulfill.

Where does this generous spirit come from? It's a response to the generosity we've received from God. The image on the cover of this Welcome Guide is a fitting illustration of this divine dynamic — God pours out His abundant blessings, and we simply cannot keep them to ourselves! Paul assured the believers in Corinth that "God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

Generosity has many outlets. We can certainly be generous with our finances, but we can also be generous with our time and talents, too.

Thousands of Houston's First members give financially to the church, and thousands volunteer at each of our campuses by connecting their passions, experience, and skills with what God is doing through our ministries. Others are blessed as they give out of the overflow of their own blessings.

This month in our InnerChange initiative, we're focusing on being generous as we grow our faith by changing our ways. As I mentioned, we already have a generous church family! However, pastor and author A.W. Tozer made a good point when he said, "Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth." We all have room to grow. Ask God to open your eyes and heart to where you can direct the overflow of His blessings in your life.

In Him,

*Pastor Gregg*

Pastor Gregg Matte

## Be Generous.



The dictionary defines generous as "showing a readiness to give more of something, as money or time, than is strictly necessary or expected." But, the original meaning implied that being generous was to be "of noble birth." From a Christian point of view, those distinct definitions actually have a clear connection to one another.

Followers of Jesus who have been born again into a new life with Him — the King of kings and Lord of lords — are now of noble birth despite their earthly heritage. With this new identity comes "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (1 Peter 1:4). God provides for our every need as His beloved children, leaving us with an abundance to share with others — more than is "strictly necessary or expected."

This month, be intentional about seeking ways that you can develop the discipline of being generous. Whether it's your finances, time and attention, encouraging words, or talents and skills, how can you give more of something in His name and to bring Him glory? For example:

- **Become a first-time giver** — if you have never given financially to Houston's First, consider doing so and partnering with thousands of others who support the ministry of the church
- **Make yourself available** — somebody in your life could benefit from one-on-one time with you to receive your encouragement, wisdom, or simply your undivided attention
- **Volunteer on a ministry team** — step up to serve and fill one of the many opportunities available right now at every campus for you to give of your time and talents

Here's how our youngest Houston's First family members can learn about being generous:

- **Preschoolers** — let them pick out items at the store to place in bags to give away to homeless people
- **Children** — work together to select toys or clothing to give away to our Faith Centers or local charities
- **Students** — volunteer on Sundays with the Preschool or Children's ministries at your campus



Find more resources for developing a generous spirit — and share your own — at [HoustonFirst.org](https://HoustonFirst.org)



Text **INNERCHANGE** to **41411** for related updates, resources, and encouragement



# WORLD MISSION OFFERING

## SUN, FEB 24



Hearing the need for financial support for missionaries headed to a foreign nation, Jesse Mercer from Georgia sent \$2,500 in 1840 to a Baptist organization to fund their efforts. His gift enabled James Huckins to follow through on God's calling to share the Gospel in the recently-formed nation of Texas. He found his way to Houston where he connected with a group of believers who had been gathering for a few years. In April 1841, they officially founded our city's first Baptist church — our church.

Four years later, in 1845, Houston's First began partnering with the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention. Now, 174 years later, Houston's First is consistently one of the top financial givers to missionary support thanks to our church family's generosity toward the World Mission Offering — our annual offering to support missions around the globe.

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention recently tweeted that we were the number one-ranked church in the SBTC in terms of giving to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program. Houston's First has been first in giving to the IMB out of more than 47,000 Southern Baptist Churches across the nation. In addition, we have ranked among the top five givers to the North American Mission Board and to Southern Baptists of Texas Convention missions.

## FROM APARTMENT MINISTRY TO INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY



John & Ruth Lapos with children Timothy and Hannah

*When you give to the World Mission Offering, you support missionaries around the world—including ones like John & Ruth Lapos whose story is rooted in our church's long-running passion for missions. Here, John shares his journey and how he and Ruth are making a difference for the Gospel...*

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO SUPPORT A MISSIONARY?

Global averages for the 3,506 IMB missionaries:

- \$59,500  
a year
- \$4,948  
a month
- \$1,144  
a week
- \$163  
a day

Our goal of \$1,000,000 for the IMB would provide financial support for almost 17 missionaries!

## LET'S CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN 2019!

Last year, the number of people from the Houston's First family contributing to the World Mission Offering increased dramatically—from about 700 in 2017 to around 2,500 in 2018—and we surpassed our goal amount, too. Our goal for this year's World Mission Offering is \$1,150,000, to be distributed as follows:

- International Mission Board — \$1,000,000
- North American Mission Board — \$100,000
- Southern Baptists of Texas Convention — \$50,000

## HOW CAN I GIVE?

On Sun, Feb 24, we'll bring our contributions forward in each worship service at every campus. If you're unable to be at church that day or prefer to give online, you can submit your contribution at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) or via the official Houston's First Baptist Church app. Pray about how God would have you support missionaries and the furthering of the Gospel—and what He might have you sacrifice to make that possible.

## WHAT IF WE RAISE MORE THAN OUR GOAL?

If more than \$1,150,000 is contributed, every additional dollar given to the World Mission Offering will go to these mission projects in our city, nation, and world:

- Heshima Children's Center (special needs children in Nairobi, Kenya) — \$50,000
- Nabor House (low-income child care at Faith Center-Spring Branch) — \$50,000
- Renovations at Faith Center-Spring Branch — \$95,000
- Church plant in Madrid, Spain — \$25,000
- Church plant in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil — \$35,000
- Church plant in New York City (Brooklyn) — \$45,000

In 1984, Bro. John Bisagno led Houston's First to give its heart, people, and resources to reach declining inner-city churches and to start new churches. As a result, I was saved in an apartment ministry launched by our church in 1986. Out of Springbrook Community Church, I was one of fourteen young men and women who were saved, called, and entered full-time ministry.

Under the leadership of great men like Harvey Kniesel (former Missions Pastor), I grew as a minister and was licensed to preach the gospel by Houston's First in 1989. Through the involvement of great ministries like the Faith Center, I grew as a missionary and was ordained into the ministry by Houston's First in 1996.

Since 2001, my family and I have served in Bangkok, Thailand, with the International Mission Board as career missionaries sent out from Houston's First. As your missionary family, here are a couple of the critical roles we fill so we can ultimately reach the 615 million people of southeast Asia with the Gospel:

- As the Southeast Asia Affinity Connector, John is the initial contact for a person and church interested in serving in southeast Asia. By answering questions and providing guidance, John gauges the best direction forward for one interested to explore pathways of mission service in the SEAP Affinity.
- As the Logistics Services Consultant of Bangkok, Ruth provides logistical, financial, and immigration support for all IMB personnel who live and travel to Bangkok. By managing the IMB Office and the Johnson Guest House, Ruth walks alongside a missionary to exercise concern and care.



## WHERE WILL YOU GO?

The World Mission Offering is one way the Houston's First family generously supports the advancement of the Gospel. Another way is by giving of their time and talents on short-term mission trips. Teams are forming now as we prepare to share Jesus' love and truth on 31 trips to 16 nations on five continents. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) or text HFBCMISSIONS to 41411 to discover where we are going and to take the first step toward joining a team!

Alaska • Brazil • Cambodia • Costa Rica • Cuba • Denver  
Dominican Republic • East Asia • El Salvador • Germany  
Guatemala • Haiti • Houston • India • Kenya • Malawi • Montana  
New York City • Nicaragua • Norway • Panama City Beach  
Pittsburgh • Spain • South Sudan

## save the date for summer fun!

It's never too late to plan for summer! Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) for details or talk to the NextGen Ministry staff at your campus about these opportunities.

**Pine Cove: Camp in the City** | June 3-7 – Sienna Campus  
**Camp Intersect** | June 9-12 – Carolina Creek Christian Camp  
**Sports Quest Soccer Camp** | June 17-21 – Cypress Campus  
**Cypress Campus Middle School Camp** | June 17-21 – Highland Lakes Camp  
**Vacation Bible School** | June 24-27 – The Loop Campus  
**Vacation Bible School** | June 24-27 – Cypress Campus  
**H1:8 Sports Camp** | July 8-11 – Cypress Campus  
**Rush Week** | July 19-25 – Panama City Beach, FL  
**Discover252 – T Bar M Day Camp** | July 29-Aug 2 – Cypress Campus

## MINISTRY IMPACT OF HOUSTON'S FIRST YEAR-TO-DATE • JULY 1, 2018–JAN 20, 2019

### DECISIONS

387 New Church Members  
51 Joined by Baptism



**13% of New Members  
were Baptized**

### ATTENDANCE

143,861 in Life Bible Studies  
(5,138 weekly average)  
146,789 in Worship Services  
(4,893 weekly average)  
26,991 on Webcast  
(900 weekly average)

### MISSIONS

23 Mission Trips with  
2,085 Team Members



### GENEROSITY

4,738 Givers to  
Great Commission Fund  
597 First-Time Givers



**13% of Givers gave  
for the first time**

## JANUARY MOMENTS



Downtown men huddle up for a UH Cougars basketball game



Students at Cypress grow their faith and have a blast at HUB Weekend



Men go out in teams to serve our widows during Men: Serve



Life Bible Study leaders get equipped at Midnight Madness



Fitness Expo at The Loop showcased our Fitness & Recreation Center



HUB students lead worship during a service at Sienna



# make it your church

## ORIENTATION



Whether you've recently visited or recently joined Houston's First, discover what it means to be a member at **Make It Your Church Orientation!** Learn about our mission, vision, ministries, and more while you meet staff members and find answers to your questions.

Register at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) for an upcoming session at your campus.

The Loop (Sun, Feb 10) • Cypress (Sun, Feb 10) • Downtown (Sun, Mar 24)  
Español (Sun, Feb 10) • Sienna (Sun, Feb 10)

## ALL CAMPUSES

### THE TABLE Tuesdays thru Mar 5 @ 6:30–8p The Loop Campus (Chapel)

What is the Lord doing in your life lately? God is with us through all the seasons of our lives but sometimes we have difficulty seeing Him in the moments of today. Women are gathering at The Table to see the "above and beyond" provision (Ephesians 3:20) of God in every moment and learn how to apply it to our lives. Upcoming teachers include Kori de Leon, Leigh Kohler, Shannon Owen, Stacey Marshall, and Amy Schreve.

CONTACT: Heather.Connolly@HoustonsFirst.org

### HIGHPOINT BIBLE STUDY Wednesdays @ 11:30a–12:40p 1010 Lamar (Suite 1250)

This weekly downtown Bible study is open to everyone! Speakers this month include Minister of Missionary Care & Projects Skyler Womack (Feb 6), Executive Pastor David Self (Feb 13 & 27), and Minister of Mobilization Ameer Omar (Feb 20). Lunch is available for purchase for \$5, or feel free to bring yours with you.

CONTACT: Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

### SUPERSTART PRETEEN WEEKEND Feb 8–9 — The Loop Campus

Our 4th and 5th graders will encounter Christ through worship, interactive teaching, and small groups—all of which are designed with their unique needs and maturity in mind. The weekend starts at 6p on Friday and ends at 3p on Saturday, with students spending the night at The Loop Campus (Level 3). Register at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org)!

CONTACT: Mike.Harvey@HoustonsFirst.org

### CANHOPE Mon, Feb 11 @ 6–8p — The Loop Campus (Reception Rm)

Ministering to families touched by cancer, CanHope gathers on the second Monday of each month for dinner and prayer. This month's speaker is Dr. Bryan Moon from M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Bring a salad, vegetable, or fruit to share and we'll provide the entree. Come and enjoy a time of testimony, prayer and fellowship. Everyone is welcome! Please RSVP to 713.957.6764.

CONTACT: Sherry.Oradat@HoustonsFirst.org

## THE LOOP CAMPUS

### IF:LOCAL Feb 8–9 — The Loop Campus (Rm 253/254)

"What could happen IF women all over the world gathered together in humility and asked God to move?" We invite women to gather for a simulcast with livestream event, learning from Proverbs what it means to rely on the wisdom of God and not on our own understanding. We'll meet Fri @ 6–9p and Sat @ 9a–1p. Register for \$10 at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

CONTACT: Heather.Connolly@HoustonsFirst.org

### HABITS OF A HEALTHY MARRIAGE Feb 15–16 — The Loop Campus (Chapel)

Married Young Adults are invited to gather for a simulcast with best-selling author and pastor Paul David Tripp. We will view his marriage conference titled Habits of a Healthy Marriage. The event takes place Fri @ 6–9p and Sat @ 9a–Noon. Register for \$10 per couple at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

CONTACT: Kristin.Hawkinson@HoustonsFirst.org

### MOMS OF THE HEART

#### Thu, Feb 21 @ 7–9p — The Loop Campus (Reception Rm)

Moms of the Heart (MOTH) is a Legacy 685 Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care Ministry gathering for foster and adoptive moms seeking to become equipped, empowered, and encouraged in their unique parenting journey. Can't make it on Feb 21? MOTH will meet again on Thu, May 16!

CONTACT: Lori.Tapley@HoustonsFirst.org

### LEGACY 685 PRE-PLACEMENT WORKSHOP

#### Sat, Feb 23 @ 8:30a–3p — The Loop Campus (Rm 249)

This workshop gives couples and individuals a broader, more comprehensive look at what our Legacy 685 ministry offers and how to get started in foster care and adoption. The workshop enables community with others at the same stage in the journey and serves as a precursor to our Waiting Families Gathering. Come learn from those who have walked this journey so you might be empowered to do the same!

Register at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

CONTACT: Lori.Tapley@HoustonsFirst.org

### MIDLINK BONUS NIGHT

#### Wed, Mar 6 @ 6:30–8p — The Loop Campus (Chapel)

Session 1 of MidLink (Wednesday night programming) wraps up on Feb 27, and Session 2 begins Mar 20 after Spring Break. On this Bonus Night, geologist Dr. Tim Clarey will look at "The Truth about the Genesis Flood" (6:30–8p) and show how sedimentary evidence confirms a global flood and oil industry data that match the biblical narrative. In his second presentation (8:30–10p), he'll look at "Do Dinosaurs Support Evolutionary Theory?" Come early for MidLink Café (4:45–6:15p). Learn more at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

CONTACT: Julianne.Kho@HoustonsFirst.org

## CYPRESS CAMPUS

### MOMS OF THE HEART

#### Thu, Feb 7 @ 7–9p — Cypress Campus (Connection Ctr)

Moms of the Heart (MOTH) is a Legacy 685 Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care Ministry gathering for foster and adoptive moms seeking to become equipped, empowered, and encouraged in their unique parenting journey. Can't make it on Feb 7? MOTH will meet again on Thu, Mar 7, and Thu, May 2!

CONTACT: Legacy685Cypress@HoustonsFirst.org

### RE | FRESH WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP

#### Thu, Feb 28 @ 9:30–11:30a — Cypress Campus

Connect with other women and enjoy a creative outlet while Erika Brunson shares her story and love for watercolor, teaching a few techniques along the way while you create your own beautiful piece of artwork to take home. Brushes, palette, and canvas are provided. Bring your creativity and a friend! Registration at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) for \$20 per person is required to reserve supplies. Childcare is provided with registration.

CONTACT: Teal.Moran@HoustonsFirst.org

## DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

### MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: ENEMIES OF THE HEART Mondays, Feb 11, 25, Mar 4 @ 6:30–8p Downtown Campus (Rm 221)

Do you know the enemies of your heart? The difficult circumstances you are dealing with today are likely being fed by forces that compel you to act in undesirable ways. We will explore the topics of guilt, anger, greed, and jealousy covered in *Enemies of the Heart*. Light snacks and beverages will be provided. Register with Peter Lee, and purchase the book through Amazon or other retailers.

CONTACT: Peter.Lee@HoustonsFirst.org

### TUESDAY MORNING PRAYER TEAM

#### Tuesdays @ 6:30–8:30a — Downtown Campus (Café)

Join with Campus Pastor Lee Hsia and members of our Prayer Team for a dedicated time of prayer for our community, our church family, and each other. Come and go as you need; coffee and breakfast snacks provided!

CONTACT: Lee.Hsia@HoustonsFirst.org

### WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: EMBRACING GOD'S PLAN Wednesdays, Feb 6–27 @ 7–8:30p Downtown Campus (Rm 216)

During this 4-week study, women will examine the dialogue between the prophet Habakkuk and God, and his questions about God's plans for Israel. We will see God's response to Habakkuk, how he lives up to the meaning of his name ("embrace"), embraces God's plan for Israel, and worships God though the plans for Israel do not look promising. Register at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

CONTACT: Erin.Krafft@HoustonsFirst.org

## ESPAÑOL CAMPUS

### PLATIQUEMOS

#### Sat, Feb 16 @ 6–8:30p Sheraton Houston Brookhollow Hotel

In marriage, learning to communicate is vital. "Let's talk" is the motto of our marriage event this year. Pastor Juan Alaniz will share practical advice on how to develop talks that will edify your spouse's life. The cost of \$50 per couple includes dinner, dessert, teaching, and a great time! Register at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

CONTACT: Douglas.Hernandez@HoustonsFirst.org

### MARRIAGE DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

#### Sun, Mar 3 @ 10:45a — The Loop Campus (Rm 405)

Every first Sunday of the month, after our 9:15a worship service, Pastor Juan Alaniz teaches a discipleship class specifically for married couples on topics that will help develop a healthy marriage.

Don't miss it!

CONTACT: Douglas.Hernandez@HoustonsFirst.org

## SIENNA CAMPUS

### THIRD WORSHIP SERVICE LAUNCH Sun, Feb 17

The Sienna Campus is growing and we're making sure there is a place for people to worship and grow in their faith. A third worship service will begin on Sun, Feb 17, as well as a new Life Bible Study. Our new worship service and Life Bible Study times will be 8:30a, 9:45a, and 11:15a. Campus Pastor Malcolm Marshall will speak live at 8:30a, and Pastor Gregg Matte's messages will be linked from The Loop at 9:45a and 11:15a. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) or text SIENNA to 41411 for more information!

CONTACT: Kelli.Boylan@HoustonsFirst.org

Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) or the Houston's First Baptist Church app for details about these and other upcoming opportunities!

**Text HFBCAPP to 41411**  
for links to download the Houston's First Baptist Church app for iOS or Android

Available on the Google play and App Store.



# 6 WHERE YOU'LL FIND US

Houston's First Baptist Church has numerous locations around town. But with members from all across the greater Houston area living out their faith and making a difference in their homes, schools, and offices, the church's ministry extends far beyond the addresses listed below!

## THE LOOP CAMPUS 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024



Gregg Matte, Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirst [t](#) @HoustonsFirst [i](#) @HoustonsFirst

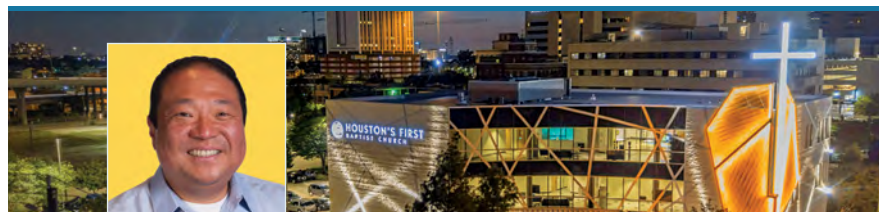
## CYPRESS CAMPUS 11011 Mason Rd, Cypress, TX 77433 (Next to Bridgeland High School)



Jason Swiggart, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirstCypress [t](#) @HFBCcypress [i](#) @HFBCcypress

## DOWNTOWN CAMPUS 1730 Jefferson, Houston, TX 77003



Lee Hsia, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HFBCDowntown [t](#) @HFBCDowntown [i](#) @HFBCDowntown

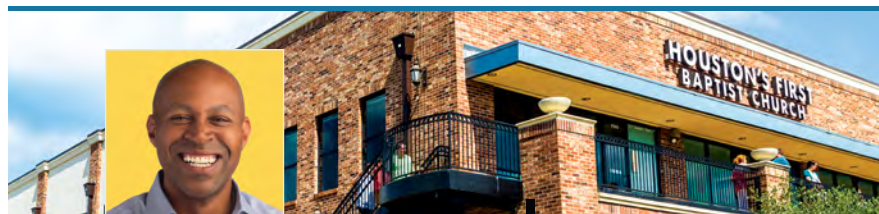
## ESPAÑOL CAMPUS 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024



Juan Alaniz, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirstEspañol [t](#) @HFBCEspañol [i](#) @HFBCEspañol

## SIENNA CAMPUS 4309 Sienna Parkway, Missouri City, TX 77459



Malcolm Marshall, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirstSienna [t](#) @HFBCSienna [i](#) @HFBCSienna

## OUR SIGNATURE STATEMENT

Houston's First Baptist Church is a relevant biblical community where people gather their hearts, grow their souls and give their lives as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

### RELEVANT

Having the passion, desire and ability to build necessary bridges to move people from culture to Christ.

### BIBLICAL

Fully embracing the beliefs and values revealed in the Bible as true, eternal and life-changing.

### COMMUNITY

Providing a place to be authentic, involved, impacted and impactful.

## JOINING HOUSTON'S FIRST

Membership at Houston's First is open to anyone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and has been baptized by immersion at our church or by a body of believers of like faith and practice. If you have not already done so, we can assist you with these decisions. At the end of the worship service, come forward to speak with a minister or volunteer, or make your way to the Connection Center at your campus. They will walk you through the process of making Houston's First your church!

## LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

Life Bible Studies are the primary method for connecting with others in smaller settings and growing together at Houston's First. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) or text **LIFEBIBLESTUDY** to 41411 to explore the many options, or ask a Guest Experience Team member at your campus for assistance in finding one that's right for you.

For more information about Houston's First, call 713.681.8000 or visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

## SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

### The Loop Campus

Worship 9:15a • 11a • 5p

Life Bible Studies 8a • 9:15a • 10:45a • 6:30p

### Cypress Campus

Worship 9:30a • 11a

Life Bible Studies 8a • 9:30a • 11a

### Downtown Campus

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

### Español Campus

Worship 9:15a

Life Bible Studies 10:45a

### Sienna Campus

Worship 9:30a • 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a • 11a

*Coming Feb 17 to Sienna!*

*Worship and Life Bible Studies both at 8:30a • 9:45a • 11:15a*